

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of detection of an imprint of a postal indicium at a location on a mail piece comprising the steps of utilising a sensor to scan along a band on the mail piece to detect a sequence of transitions between light and dark reflectance areas within said band, said band extending across said location; generating an indication of presence of the imprint of the postal indication in response to detection of a transition succeeding a predetermined number of initial transitions at a start of the sequence of transitions.
2. Apparatus for imprinting postal indicia on mail pieces comprising printing means operable to print a postal indicium in a required location on the mail piece; a first sensor responsive to reflectance transitions between light and dark along a band of the mail piece extending across said location to generate a sequence of first signals corresponding respectively to reflectance transitions along said band; means operative in response to a first signal occurring after a predetermined number of said first signals at a start of said sequence to generate a second signal indicative of a postal indicium imprint on the mail piece.